

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-34 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 15 is amended. No new matter is added.

Applicant appreciates the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3-9, 11-28, and 30-34.

Applicant filed a certified copy of the priority document on March 26, 2004.

Applicant requests the Examiner acknowledge receipt of the certified copy in the next Office Action.

Applicant filed an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) on January 23, 2007. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner initial and return the PTO-1449 to the Applicant showing consideration of the references by the Examiner.

Claims 1, 2, 10, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Kono (U.S. Patent No. 6,393,251). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

With respect to independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in independent claim 29, Kono does not teach a first comparing unit that compares the detected length of the document with a predetermined length that is larger than a length of the closed portion; and a controlling unit that determines whether the document is to be transported to the inversion-and-transport path or not on the basis of a result of the comparison by the first comparing unit and controls the document transporting unit on the basis of the determination.

Kono discloses an automatic document feeding device including a first route (Fig. 2, letters a and b) and a switchback path for switching back a document (Abstract, lines 5 and 6, shown in Figs. 12-19). In Kono, all documents are sent through the document switchback path regardless of the size of the document. Figs. 12-15 of Kono disclose a mode by that a second document D2 is fed to the first route while the first document D1 is in the the switchback path. Figs. 16-19 disclose a mode by which the second document D2 is delayed

before reaching the first route until the first document D1 is fed through the switchback path (see also Abstract, lines 10-16). Thus, in Kono both long and short documents are fed through the switchback path regardless of their size.

Importantly, in Kono, whether or not the second document D2 is fed through the first route to the switchback path is not based on the length of the document D2. Instead, the decision to feed document D2 through the first route and switchback path is based on the length of the first document D1 (see Figs. 16-19). Thus, the determination to feed the document D2 is not based on the length of the document but on the preceding document.

The Examiner asserts that the second mode, in which a second long document D2 is delayed from entering the first route (Fig. 2, letters a and b), teaches a controlling unit that determines whether the document is to be transported to the inversion-and-transport path. As stated in the Office Action, the second document D2 is "held up" in the feeding start position. However, delaying the document D2 in the feeding start position is not the same as determining whether or not the document is to be transported to the inversion-and-transport path because Kono teaches that eventually all documents are fed through the switchback path. Furthermore, delaying the feeding of the second document D2 is not based on the length of the second document, but rather on the length of the first document D1. Thus, Kono does not teach a controlling unit that determines whether the document is to be transported to the inversion-and-transport path (based on the length of the document compared to a predetermined length).

Applicant respectfully requests the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:JAR/tbm

Attachment:  
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: April 16, 2007

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